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**SPATIO-TEMPORAL CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND NARRATIVE TEMPORALITY IN  
“THE SOUND AND FURY”**

**From temporal-spatial ambiguity to clarity through linguistic analysis**

**Abstract**

This research deals with William Faulkner’s representation of time and space in “The Sound and The Fury” from cognitive-linguistic perspective. Our research suggests that temporal-spatial analysis of “The Sound and The Fury” is the key milestone for understanding the fiction. In spite of the vast body of scholarship associated with William Faulkner’s work, few studies suggest detailed evaluation of Faulkner’s view of time and space. It’s worth mentioning that studies regarding thematic relevance of time in Faulkner’s fiction are more common than from the perspectives of linguistics. The analysis leads to the conclusion that temporal and spatial relationships are essential to our understanding of Faulkner’s narrative as they go beyond the specification of a date and a location. Our method of analysis involves the exploration of time and space in “The Sound and The Fury” based on Genette’s temporal models “order”, “duration”, and “frequency” and on spatial elements of bodily experience in cognitive theory utilizing *image schema (Source-Path-Goal)* based on which, the decryption of abstract words is associated with taking emotional journey comprehending metaphors through many sensory modalities.

**Keywords:** flashbacks, temporal patterns, order, duration, frequency, image schema, grief as a journey

**Introduction**

This research deals with William Faulkner’s representation of time and space in “The Sound and The Fury” from cognitive-linguistic perspective. Time and space have always played an important role in Faulkner’s fiction and are very often the subject of criticism due to the temporal-spatial ambiguity the

author applies. The most complicated text in this sense is considered “The Sound and The Fury.” We claim that temporal patterns in “The Sound and The Fury” are set against the reader’s temporal experience of the text as the author’s narrative mode is out of chronological order operated by “disjunctions and effacements” inherent for the stream of consciousness and postmodern narrative. Before taking the analysis of the “Sound and the Fury” let us make clear that we are concerned here with temporal spatial analysis of the text. In what follows, we review key concepts of temporality in narrative, as well as research on narrative representations of space in the text.

### **Methodology**

Our method of analysis involves the exploration of time and space in “The Sound and The Fury,” (1) firstly based on Genette’s temporal models “order”, “duration”, and “frequency.”

(2) and secondly on spatial elements of bodily experience in cognitive theory; to be more specific, in order to visualize the main content and core concepts of “The Sound and The Fury,” we rely on the theories of cognitive linguists, *particularly Johnson’s path* according to which we conceive of plot as a metaphorical network of path, which either “converge or diverge of goals which are either reached or blocked” ( R.Gibbs 2006). More literally, their image of a work can involve the paths of the protagonists around their world, bringing together time and space to shape a plot.

The above mentioned spatial-temporal patterns enable us to have an access to the actions and emotions of the characters, foreground certain events and reduce the status of others. Moreover, they bring new evidence and insight to received wisdom. Temporal-spatial patterns help us to dig deep and transfer the author’s & characters’ thoughts, sensations and emotions from a different scope, also bring new evidence and insight to received wisdom.

Not to go afield, a few words about the text. “The Sound and the Fury” is Faulkner’s fourth novel, the novel is divided into four parts, each told by a different narrator. Despite the fact that there are a lot of essays and research on the Sound and the Fury, used temporal structure in the novel still attracts the researchers’ attention and remains the subject of discussion. Spatial temporal analyses of “the Sound and the Fury” are more than background elements in the narrative; they are part of its fabric, affecting our basic understanding of a narrative text.

We are particularly interested in the first and second section of the text, since is where the issue of temporality is most in evidence. The first section is told from the point of view of Benjy Compson, a thirty-three-year old idiot. Reading this part is profoundly difficult, because Benjy is mentally handicapped and has no concept of time or place, sensory stimuli in the present bring him back to another time and place in the past. Most of his memories concern his sister, Caddy, who is in some ways the central character in the novel. Key memories regarding Caddy include a time when she uses perfume, loses her virginity, and Caddy's/her wedding. Benjy also recalls his name change, (from Maury to Benjamin) his brother Quentin's suicide and the day of his castration.

The second section of the text is narrated by Quentin, Benji's brother. Unlike Benji, Quentin doesn't need time or place-sensory stimuli to go to another time and place in the past he is just trapped by time, unable to move beyond his memories in the past. Quentin's section is longer, more obscure and more packed with images and fragmented ideas than Benji's. Based on the fact that Quentin's mind works more quickly than Benji's, the shifts in time in this section are much more frequent. Quentin has run several memories together in the course of a minute, unlike Benji, whose mind calls up one scene at a time.

### **Instruments**

In the first part, the research is aimed to discuss the temporal relationships between "story" and "discourse" based on Genette's suggestions: "order," "duration," and "frequency." (1) The first relates to the order of events; (2) the second concerns how long events or scenes last; (3) and the third concerns how often an event occurs.

In the second part of our research, we will discuss the subjective attitudes and emotions of the characters, the physical and psychological point of view of different protagonists that can be considered as an important structuring device. The author uses the first-person narration in Benji's section that assumes the participant role within the fictional context and so adopts a subjective perspective on the events. In Quentin's and Benji's section, we follow **paths** around the narrative world with no protagonist present.

Thus, the research presents main content and core concepts of "The Sound and The Fury" based on the

theories of cognitive linguists, particularly *Johnson's path*; according to cognitive linguists, we conceive of plot as a metaphorical network of path. The metaphor that we have identified throughout the novel for the *path* is *grief*.

We suggest that the perception of grief in the “The Sound and The Fury” is expressed by the destruction of Compson’s family, the fatal destiny of a disabled person, the author’s emphasis on immorality and severity of the society.

We strengthen our arguments by identifying novel’s key themes: innocence, death, grief, sin, immorality which reveal themselves naturally in terms of images and symbols like muddy drawers, perfume, water, shadow and honeysuckle.

Our method of analysis involves the exploration of the leading theme in the text with *image schema (Source-Path-Goal)* based on which, the decryption of abstract words is associated with taking emotional journey comprehending metaphors through many sensory modalities. Thus, we conceive of *grief* in the “The Sound and The Fury” as a journey: (1) *moving from a source*, (2) *along a path*, (3) toward a particular destination (*goal*) within the affective space associated with grief.

Based on the notion of *grief as a journey*, the analysis leads to the conclusion that the characters in the novel conceive of emotional experience like grief in terms of bodily actions “performed upon concrete entities and spaces.” The given analysis enables us to read Faulkner from a different scope. The research brings new evidence and insight to received wisdom.

### **Linguistic Analysis**

We have already mentioned that we rely on the theories of cognitive linguists, *particularly on Johnson's path* according to which, we conceive of plot as a metaphorical network of path. Cognitive linguists use *image schema (Source- Path-Goal)* in order to decode the metaphor. The decryption of metaphor in “The Sound and The Fury” is associated with taking emotional journey, that means that we comprehend an abstract word or idea through many sensory modalities, kinesthetically. Accordingly, we conceive of grief in the “The Sound and The Fury” as a journey, *grief as a journey* forms a coherent scenario of the grief that is strengthened by the author’s narrative mode.

To encode the meaning of grief, we use an image schema Source-Path-Goal suggested by cognitive linguists in the following way:

- (1) **moving from a source** (source is grief from where the characters unconsciously try to escape )
- (2) **along a path** ( path is Compson’s life with a lot of misfortunes, characters try hard to overcome the obstacles)
- (3) **Goal** -toward a particular destination within the affective space associated with grief. (and final destination, after going through many obstacles in the first and second section, is oblivion and death. **Benjy, Quentin and Caddy** can’t deal with the pain and the past of Compson’s family).

And how are the characters trying to deal with grief being lost in the dark tunnel of grief and moving forward to the other side?

#### **A few words describing approaches to time in the narrative**

With the help of Genette’s temporal patterns, we identified the main messages of the narrator which he delivers through the repetition and spacing. Genette’s temporal patterns enable us to foreground certain events and have an access to emotions of the characters, it will also help us to prove how ***grief as a journey*** is expressed in “the Sound and the Fury,” and how do the characters try to get over the obstacles they encounter on their life path.

Theorists posit two basic temporalities of narrative which are generally referred to as “story” and “discourse.” The essential distinction here is between the “story” as the basic sequence of events that can be abstracted from any narrative telling and the “discourse” as the presentation and reception of these events in linguistic form, in other words, the act of writing resulting in the written text and the act of reading that text. Genette suggests three main areas in which temporal relationships between story and discourse can produce interesting effects. The first relates to the order of events; the second concerns how long events or scenes last; and the third concerns how often an event occurs. They are known respectively as “order”, “duration,” and “frequency.”

#### **Analysis of the text based on Genette’s Narrative Discourse**

##### **Order**

To begin with the ***order***, all reading is a combination of memory and anticipation. Our focus on

whatever moment in the text we have reached will invariably be colored by our memory of what has gone before and our anticipation of what is to come. The order in which events are presented in the text is therefore crucial to our temporal experience of narrative. In some narratives, events are told strictly in the order in which they occur. But they may also be told out of order, as in Benji's and Quentin's case. Many narrative texts employ flashbacks, analepsis in Genette's terms, in order to fill in the past history of protagonists while avoiding a lengthy introduction or in order to reveal new facts.

**And how can we explain the use of flashbacks in Benji's section?**

Let's begin with the author's narrative mode, we suggest the stylistic analysis of the first section. A writer applies a stream of consciousness technique where a reader reveals the character's unspoken thoughts and feelings without having recourse to dialogue or description. In order to emphasize mental aberration represented in Benji's and Quentin's section, the author uses internal analepsis that is a flashback to an earlier point in the narrative. So it means that Benji Compson recounts via flashbacks the earliest events in the novel. Benji's present and past memory is measured between 1898 when he turns three and April 7, 1928 his thirty-third birthday. Faulkner identifies April Seventh, 1928 as the narrative present. As Benji has no concept of time or place, sensory stimuli in the present bring him back to another time and place in the past. Faulkner utilizes organic use of punctuation to indicate the shift of time, so flashbacks are expressed in italics. The italics signal to the reader that there is a shift in time, which is usually sudden.

**We will show an example of flashback from the text**

1. "My poor baby." mother said. She let me go. "You and Versh take good care of him, honey." "Yessum." Caddy said. We went out Caddy said, "You needn" go, Versh. I'll keep him for a while." He went on and we stopped in the hall an Caddy knelt and put her arms around me and her cold bright face against mine. She smelled like trees. "You aren't a poor boy. Are you. Are you. You have got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy."

2. *Can't you shut up that moaning and slobbering, Luster said. Ain't you shamed of yourself, making all this racket. We passed the carriage house, where the carriage was. It had a new wheel.*

3. “Git in, now, and set still until your maw come.” Dilsey said. She shoved me into the carriage. T.P. held the reins. “Clare I don’t see how come Jason wont get a new surrey.” Dilsey said. “This thing going to fall to pieces under you all some day. Look at them wheels.

In the given example, different episodes are told one after another without any coherent link between them, sensory stimuli in the present bring Benji back to another time and place in the past, instantly and without warning, except for a change in a typeface from Roman to italic.

In this passage, we can get some sense of the time by noting who is taking care of Benji. Three black servants look after him at different times: Versh when Benji is a small child, T.P. when Benji is approximately 15 years old, and Luster in the present when Benji is 33. As there are different episodes in the example, they refer to different times. In the first one, Benji is with his family members in the house; mother expresses sympathy for Benji and calls him “my poor baby.” Caddy is trying to correct her mother’s mistake explaining that he is not a “poor boy”. Caddy’s warm rudimentary speech reminds Benji of Luster’s scolding and memory image appears instantly. The last episode is also thematically different from the previous ones.

Throughout the first segment of Benji’s section, Luster interrupts Benji’s memory by speaking to him often in response to Benji’s own bellowing. Based on the fact that Benji can’t speak and he is the narrator of the first section, we have an access to the plot of the story through his perceptions and feelings. Almost in all flashbacks, we can spot a direct presentation of utterances that put emphasis on folks’ attitude toward Benji and makes it a leading theme of the story.

If we dig deeper, we can spot that Benji’s memories are more focused on his perceptions and emotions than on the past events. They are the key to comprehending the flood of chaotically unrelated sensations. Understanding of his memories depends on the depths rather than on the present moment and we can say that they are more meaningful than past-oriented. We have identified 53 time shifts in Benji’s section. The technique of shifting from one of Benji’s remembered time zones to another-without warning or transition of any sort, constitutes Faulkner’s strategy for showing how Benji remains innocent of the abstraction of passing time.

**And what role does the author play in the text?**

As it is presented, he plays none. The author disappears entirely, there are no commentaries, no stage direction from him. The very absence of narratorial intervention has significant effects on the reader that positions him in Benjy's consciousness.

### **Duration**

The second temporal position in Genette's model is duration.

The treatment of duration is an important way of foregrounding certain events and reducing the status of others. If an episode is narrated in great detail, this leads us to assume that it is of some significance. Variations in duration can be used to show which scenes are the most important. A scene which is narrated briefly will usually be considered less important than a scene which it takes many pages to narrate. Or scene which is narrated more than once may show a narrator's obsession or it may reveal different views of the same events by different characters.

Throughout Benjy's and Quentin's section, we see the blows fall on the Compson's family - Grandmother dies, Mr Compson dies, Caddy gets pregnant and must be married off, Quentin commits suicide, Benjy is castrated to neutralize his sexual urges. Despite the serious of misfortunes that happened in Compson's family, we can claim that section one has Benji as the centre of the thing, Faulkner in the name of Benjy tells us about the fatal destiny of a disabled person and severity of the society toward him.

If we dig deeper into reading, we can reveal that depiction of dissolution of Banjy's life takes up the biggest space, though it is retold in nonchronological order. Faulkner partitions Benjy's memories into time levels in different episodes. The elements of fluidity and incoherence are emphasized by the frequent interruption of one idea by another that reveals Benjy's mental deficiency.

In the first segment of the text, there is a lot of direct presentation of utterances, especially in flashbacks that emphasize servants' and family members' negative attitude toward Benjy. The following events such as Benji's name change and Benji's castration continue the coherent scenario of Benjy's tragedy. The scenes showing how people treat Benji are followed by the dialogues regarding name change, characters give a different interpretation to this fact as they are more meaningful than a mentally retarded person's name change. Variation in duration expressed with repetition, develops the

main idea of the text, it enables us to transcribe a character's thoughts and sensations without the author's intervention. The fragmented scenes regarding Benjy intensify reader's anticipation of what is to come, it alerts a reader with a sense of impending doom that leads him to the culmination of the story - Benjy's castration.

Benji experiences the greatest distress in the novel's present moment, this is the reason why he spends his longest time, as measured in textual space, in a single time level, in 1898 when he was three years old and Caddy was with him.

To sum up, based on the analysis above, we can conclude that Benjy's torture is one of the major themes for Faulkner. Accordingly, Benjy's narrative reflects the fatal destiny of a disabled person, merciless of human beings and the cruelty of the society.

### **Frequency**

The third temporal pattern in Genette's model is frequency. The number of times an event is narrated can influence the reader's interpretation of a narrative. Repetition involves more than one occurrence at the level of discourse of a single story event. Repetition can also be used to portray more than one view of events in modernist stream-of-consciousness novel.

The stream of consciousness technique or interior monologue is widely used in Benjy's and Quentin's section. Faulkner's handling of stream of consciousness technique allows the narrator to shape a particular version of the character's consciousness in terms of images, which need not be actual words or thoughts as the character expressed them. Faulkner in "The Sound and The Fury" presents symbols as substitutes for rationally formulated ideas. We have identified the symbols that signify many things for Benjy and Quentin, one of them is water-the most important symbol in both sections. For Benjy and Quentin, water is never simply water but it is a symbol of purification and death.

Smell is the most important sensory stimuli for Benji, he associates his sister Caddy with trees and purity. Caddy grows up and loses her innocence, therefore she loses the smell of the tree. When Caddy uses the perfume, kisses a boy and loses virginity, she washes herself in order to please Benjy. She washes the perfume off, after kissing her boyfriend, she washes out her mouth with soap. Quentin, in his section recalls that on the night Caddy lost virginity, Benjy drags her into the bathroom so she can wash herself. In this way, Benjy tries to save caddy and himself from decay.

So water in Benjy's section is the symbol of purification, Caddy tries to wash away the sins, but she can't, as to a greater extent it doesn't only refer to Caddy and Benjy but to Compson's family on the whole. As Caddy says "there is a curse on their family, it's not their fault." Caddy finally surrendered - she loses the smell of the tree and Benjy loses Caddy.

The idea of impurity is widely spread in the text and reflects the future of family members. Benjy, Caddy and Quentin try to avert the disastrous fate that Compson's blood seems to bring. The concept of sin and survival still continues in Quentin's section. The dialogues between Quentin and Caddy, father and Quentin predict the disastrous future of the characters.

In the last part of our research, we are trying to explain how the *grief as a journey* is reflected in the text. Benjy's, Quentin's and Caddy's life paths are full of misery without the light on the other side. In both sections, we can see the attempt of the main characters to get over the spiritual doomsday of Compson's family, there is struggle between sin and purity, morality and immorality, attempt to survive and wash away the sins. Being lost in the dark tunnel of grief, they are trying to move forward to the other side, but it turns out difficult to deal with it, as they can't escape from the family curse. Quentin, in one of the dialogues with his father tries to take all responsibilities for Caddy's actions when he tells his father that had incest with his sister, Quentin tries to inflate Caddy's virginity into something crucial and by taking responsibility on his shoulders get rid of the family curse that follows them. Quentin was struck by his father's indifference and dismissive comments he says in effect, "you will get over it, there are more serious things in life than the loss of virginity. Quentin doesn't want to "get over it". The last remembered conversation with Mr. Compson explains one of the motivations of Quentin's suicide.

In Quentin's section the chance for the family to survive after going through many obstacles is narrowed, the appearance of death symbols in this section is a proof of it. Water- the symbol of purification in Benjy's section is transformed into the symbol of death. Quentin's obsession with shadows, water and time is imbued with a sense of impending disaster, spiritual doomsday of Compson's family and fatal destiny of their children.

On the basis of the above discussion, we can conclude that the repetition of the events or scenes in different configurations has a dramatic impact on the reader. The symbols as substitutes for rationally formulated ideas in Benjy's and Quentin's sections are repeated so frequently that they come to

dominate not only Benjy's or Quentin's consciousness but the reader's also.

## **Conclusion**

In the research, we have analysed the first and second section of "The Sound and The Fury" from cognitive-linguistic perspective. We have identified the main content and core concepts of the text based on Johnson's path according to which we perceive plot as a metaphorical network of path and based on Genette's temporal patterns: order, duration and frequency.

We conceive of grief in the "The Sound and The Fury" as a journey, and encode the meaning of it with an image schema *Source-Path-Goal*.

We claim that in the first and second section, characters experience grief as a journey that shadows their life, during their life path they try to overcome the obstacles, purify from their sins and survive but they can't deal with it, as Sartre says, "time is frozen in these sections and there is no future ahead." Benjy and Quentin can't accept the reality of their existence; unfortunately the final destination of their life path is oblivious and death.

With the help of Genette's temporal patterns, we have explored time and space in the text and identified the main messages of the narrator through the repetition and spacing in the following way:

### **(1) Order**

Benji's and Quentin's sections are told out of order, the narrative line is fragmented into nonchronological segments. The author uses internal analepsis in order to fill in the past history of protagonists and emphasize mental aberration represented in Benji's and Quentin's section. The shift of time is expressed in italics, used stylistic device helps the author completely disappear from the text.

### **(2) Duration**

We have revealed that despite the fragmented scenes regarding Benjy, depiction of dissolution of Banji's life takes up the biggest space, though it is retold in nonchronological order. Used stylistic device develops the main idea of the text.

### **(3) Frequency**

We claim that the repetition of the events or scenes in different configurations has a dramatic impact on the reader. The major themes are expressed with symbols and they are used so frequently that influence the reader's interpretation of a narrative.

Overall, Genettes temporal models enabled us to foreground certain events and gain an access to the actions and emotions of the characters, also helped us to prove how grief as a journey is expressed in "the Sound and the Fury."

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A researcher at Ivane Javakhishvili State University on the Faculty of Humanities, English Philology. Currently, she is investigating William Faulkner's Narrative Mode; Time and Path Image Schema in Faulkner's Fiction from cognitive-linguistic perspective, to be particular, she analyzes *grief* in Faulkner's texts in terms of the *source-path-goal* image schema looking at how this underlying schema changes across his novels. She has participated in several conferences and programs in Europe and the United States. In 2016, she won a scholarship in Groningen University and attended a series of lectures on the topic of New Developments in Narrative Theory, Uses of Narrative.

She holds the post of a lecturer for Professional English at the International Black Sea University teaching professional English to Law students, also delivering lectures to the students of International Relations, Public Administration and Business Management. She is a teachers' trainer in the Ministry of Education, Teacher Professional Development Centre.

She was honored to receive a bursary award by the prestigious British Association for American Studies (BAAS) and the US Embassy for a clear contribution to Faulkner Studies in Royal Holloway University of London (London, 2018). She was a PhD Scholar in University of Groningen (Netherlands, 2016), a researcher in University of Mississippi (US, 2013), a scholar in Indiana University (US, 2011). She is an owner of an International Certificate in Teaching English to Speaker's of Other Languages. She has awards for excellence in teaching from American Councils for International Education and Ministry of Education